often a member of a socially lower ethnic group ( see section B ), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", suspected of having learned occult powers ( e.g. in smithcraft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his children would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can be observed in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brewers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer" carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
563 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamis"
292 under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
754 nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

624 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mender"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-collector, the thiefcather-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (worāda shum) and lieutenant (mislanē) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq sēw" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

526 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shangalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale 567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



566 [423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvee, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction os the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official [689] task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

566 794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of the church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

566 794 mand of the feudal lord that deacons, choir-boys with good voices, be supplied to him. The "gultaññña" could be made responsible for this, and would search the countryside for likely peasant boys. For his service in acting as music critic in examining the boys, and as their trainer, the "master of the chant" would receive a specified number of baskets of grain from the feudal lord, who, of course, passed this extra expense on down the line until the bill was finally footed by the peasant gabbar.

566 The term "gabbar" itself is closely related (perhaps derived from) "gebber", feast (especially feasting of guest by noblemen, or soldiers after victory). Indeed, it is the gabbar who supplies the materials for the feasts.

[242] In view of this regular as well as irregular exploitation, it is not surprising that the gabbar did not try to improve the land he worked, and to this day leaves more fields fallow than he works in any given year. A rank above him, the "gultanna" suffered from insecure tenure. Above him loomed the authority of the feudal warlord ("färäsäbya") and the shadow of landowning monasteries and parish churches. Their power, in turn, varied inversely with the power, or weakness, of the "king of kings".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-centered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423
566 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



423 the Middle East; particularly of the Ottoman empire, where
566 they were also refered to as "çiftliks" (peasant estates that had passed into the possession of soldiers, "sipahi", who in turn constituted fiefs assigned to officers as personal estates.[70]

423 The process which created "gult" land can be clear-
566 ly observed intthe history of Abyssinia toward the end
701 of the 19th century. Soldiers and officers in the armies of Menilek II were assigned conquered Galla lands in lieu of salary. They were free from land tax, but obliged to pay "asrat" (tithe) on produce, which tax they of course passed on to the Galla "gabbar". The sons of these veterans usually assumed the same military responsibilities when they came of age, so that the lands passed on to them on the same terms. These lands were referred to as "mädäriya" lands, and

70. Inalcik, Halil: Land problems in Turkish History. (in) Muslim World, July 1955, pp. 221-8.

423 the plots carried names adsociating them with the speci-
566 fic services owed by the holder of the homestead:
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"land for the rifleman" (infantry)

"land for the guard of prisoners" (military police)

"land for the bearer of the tent" (standard bearer)

"land for the shield-bearer" (bodyguard)

"land for the forager" (quartermaster)

"land for the left flank" (i.e. platoon attacking on the left column); etc.

The "gultenña" homesteader was always on call for a new military campaign. His land was regarded as his for enjoyment of produce only, like land allocated by a father to his son upon marriage. The size of "gult" land could vary from one gasha (usually about 50 acres) for a soldier-veteran of long service, to as much as 1000 gasha for a high officer of feudal nobility. The latter could, and usually did, set aside part of his "gult" land as endowment for a monastery or church, and the gabbar on such land passed to the control of the church.

There is very little "gult" land in old-Amhara provinces dating from this period of Menelik II. If found there, it is usually older, since his conquests were farther south, southwest and southeast.

On his long and distant campaigns, Menelik II thus found his supply lines assured, for the "gultenna" was obliged to feed passing armies and to aid the military foragers. He had also to act as host to any passing "nagadras" (treasurer, customs agent) of Menelik during intervals of peace.

423 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly,
566 the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a
701 contract with his "gultenñas", which gave both parties some security in what they could expect of each other in services and privileges. This contract usually took the
[427] form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gultenña" thus became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor for him one day in three, making his team of oxen available on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gultenña" thus became a sharecropper and little better off than the "gabbar", especially if no war service interrupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the "gultenña" was frequently called to war, and his status as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gultenña" much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom the gultenña was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion, the gultenña found himself under a newly-appointed Ras who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the homesteaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa, (where fertile land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 "gultenna" and his family might try to become squatters,
566 "chesanna", on someone's fallow land, and risk being chased away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gultenna" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gultenna".

178 423 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full force, the "gultenna" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gultennas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest"and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5



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712
ved to the priesthood. Within the second circle of military encampment, protected by the ring of cavalry, were housed the "bajirond" (treasurer-quartermaster-ordnance), scribes, artisans of all kinds, chamberlains ("aggafari") serving the high nobles, the military police ("zäbäña", lit. watchmen), the thornbush corrals of battle horses and the horse watchmen, cook-houses, and latrine areas for the privileged centers.[72]

The rear of the camp, as well as the rear guard during march, (called the "däjän sefra"), was usually commanded by the most trustworthy, noble councilor of the king or ras; his title was "Blaten-gēta" (lit. Councilor), a semi-civilian title about equivalent to Dejazmach. But unlike the latter, it was usually held by an older, wiser, less tempestuous, slow-moving gray-bearded friend of the commander-in-chief.

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B. Social and Psychological Roles in Military Life: Noble Officers and Common Soldiers.

The location in camp of military officers and men thus indicated the social position of feudal nobles, soldier fief-holders, and "gabbar"-sharecroppers in civilian life. The rank-order can be listed, with some simplification, as follows:

72. Griaule, M.: Un Camp Militaire Abyssin. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Tome IV, 1934, pp. 117-122.

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Table 4: Feudal Nobility: Title, Hierarchy, Military Rank and Function, Land Tenure

| Title | Military Rank | Military Function | Land-Tenure Reward | Hierarchy of Nobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| farasenya (lit, knight on horseback) | basic in officer class | cavalry | gult fief | may be elevated to nobility, and get rest land. |
| balambaras (lit. lord of mountain-fortress | basic in officer class | various, active battle duties; e.g. chief of shield bearer("gasha Jägrē alāqa") | gult fief | basic rank in low nobility of owners of rest lands.(Baron). |
| gorazmach (lit. commander of left flank) | (lieutenant or captain) | command left flank of an army division | rest lands | basic rank of aspirants to higher nobility |
| ñāñazmach (lit.commander or right flank) | (major, in European equivalent) | command right flank of an army division | rest lands | next higher rand, permanent, usually inherited nobility |
| fitawrari (lit. commander of advance guard) | (colonel, in European equivalent) | command frontal attack of massed army division | rest lands | next higher rank. Basic rank of teen-age royalty |
| däjazmach (lit. commander of the gate) | (General, Duke, in Feudal Europe) | commander of army division; commander of bodyguard in camp. | rest lands | next higher rank. Rank of young royalty on reaching manhood. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ras (lit.head) | (Marshall.Archduke in Feudal Europe) | commander-in-chief of an entire army | rest lands | next higher rank. Head of provincial dynasty. Adult royalty prior to becoming king. |
| negus (king) | ---- | commander of several armies | rest provinces | formerly independent king. No longer in existence |
| lej(lit."Childe") | ---- (may be appointed Däjazmach or as he grows up) | | Fitawrari ----- | title of infant son of king of of ras. title of sons of emperor |
| lul (Royal Prince) | ----(usually appointed to Ras, as he grows to manhood) | | ----- | title of sons of emperor |
| negusä nägäst or negus negusti (lit. king of kings) | ---- | commander-in chief of all armies | rest of home province (mad-byet); ruler of entire country. | assumes highest nobility on coronation. |

632 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained
566 by requiring the "gultenna" of the district to come to town every three months, for a one-month statute labor, then called "wär tära", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "gezat" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the
692 king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his"palace". The latter could range rrom a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "danya", to hear more toutine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression.

625 The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shalaqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "nebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "däbtära",

633 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "mälkäña", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "läfafi" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

779 the nation in western patterns.
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(1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-
[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pa-
[566] gan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.
[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in
[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

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178 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïnä aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility; the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 130 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotälay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the [566] feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such [282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.